



Women's Center update: Resolve to have a healthy family

Lisa Michele Utzig

January 9, 2007

The New Year is a time for looking back on the past, and more importantly, looking forward to the coming year. This is frequently a time to reflect on the changes we would like to make, or need to make in ourselves. Some of the most common resolutions are to lose weight, stop smoking and get out of debt. While these are all healthy choices that will enhance the quality of one's life, one of the most important yet challenging resolutions may involve creating healthy relationships with family and friends.

Healthy relationships rarely come easy in this chaotic world. A good relationship takes time, understanding, and a willingness to compromise and grow. There are thousands of books, TV shows and seminars on the subject and, yet, the basics can seem like a challenge too difficult to face.

Every individual deserves to be loved and treated with respect by his or her partner. Unfortunately, many people find themselves in unhealthy relationships in which they are disrespected, ignored or abused.

Parents set examples for healthy or unhealthy relationships early in a child's life. No matter how much a person strives to be different from their mother or father, it is inevitable that that person will have many of the same personality traits, especially those behaviors or traits that involve communication. Passing unhealthy traits to one's children such as violence, abuse and disrespect creates a cycle of violence. Many of the individuals who seek services from the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center grew up with violence and abuse in the home and now, as adults, find themselves in the same unhealthy relationships, continuing the cycle.

Breaking the cycle of violence can be challenging, but it is not impossible. It takes dedication, education, a strong desire to change and the courage to look deep inside one's self. It is important to seek outside help and find support in family, friends or a counselor. Individuals who have learned that abusive behaviors and violence are acceptable ways to get what they want are not equipped with the tools to communicate effectively and need to relearn these skills.

If you or someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship, the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center may be able to help. South Lake Tahoe Women's Center offers confidential peer counseling from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 2941 Lake Tahoe Blvd., across from South Tahoe Middle School. The center also offers a variety of group classes such as Domestic Violence Support Group, Batterer's Treatment and Parenting. If you would like more information about any of our services, please call (530) 544-2118 or the 24-hour crisis line at (530) 544-4444 to speak with an advocate in English, Spanish or Tagalog.

The Women's Center Business office was financed through a low-cost loan from the Rural Community Assistance Corporation.

- Lisa Michele Utzig is the outreach coordinator at the South Lake Tahoe Women's Center.